4

A NEW

METHOD

OF

FARMING.

By WILLIAM PLUNKETT, Gent.

Si quid noviſti rectius iſtis,
Candidus imperti: Si non, his utere mecum. HOR.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
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A NEW

METHOD

OF

FARMING, &c.

WHETHER Tillage conduceth to the Good of a Nation, or whether the want of it in this Kingdom hath occaſioned the loſs of immenſe Sums of Money to us, more than the Exportation of Beef, Tallow and Hides, have made us amends for, I ſhall not enter upon; the difference in many reſpects being too viſible.

IT is well known that the great Expence attending the old Method of Tillage in

this Kingdom, and the Poverty it reduceth Land to, hath not only been the Occaſion of the breaking of *Farmers*, but alſo of laying down to Graſs moſt of the Lands within thirty Miles of *Dublin*; which formerly ſupplyed it with Corn, independent of any other Country. This hath put me upon trying Experiments, how to lighten that Expence, and at the ſame Time enrich my Land. How far I have ſucceeded; my Manner of *Farming*, compared with the old Method of *Tillage* practiſed in this Kingdom will ſhew.

For the better Underſtanding the Difference between the old Method of *Tillage*, and my Manner of *Farming*; I ſtate the Expence and Profits upon each ſeparately, by which the Diſadvantage of the firſt, and the Advantage of the latter appears.

A Farmer who holds two Hundred Acres of Land (and ſo in proportion) ſeldom gives leſs than four Plowings to his Land for Winter Corn, and divides, or ought to divide his Farm for three Seaſons; that is, fifty Acres for Winter Corn, fifty Acres for Spring Corn, and fifty Acres for Fallow; allowing the other fifty

Acres

Acres for Paſture and Meadow, including Roads, Ditches and waſte Grounds.

I WILL ſuppoſe ſuch a *Farmer* to have ſix Barrels of *Wheat* an Acre fit for the Market, ſix of *Oats*, or four of *Peaſe* an Acre, and to ſell his *Wheat* at fifteen Shillings a Barrel, his *Oats* at five Shillings, and *Peaſe* at ſeven Shillings a Barrel; which is a Produce and Price that commonly holds for choice good Corn, one Year with another. A Farm of this Quantity cannot be tilled with leſs than twenty common Plow-Horſes; the firſt Coſt upon buying ſo great a Number of Cattle, in Compariſon to the Number I require in my Manner, I ſhall not take Notice of; there being too many Expences to load a *Farmer* with beſides; wherefore I make the Charge of the Farm tilled in the old Method, to be according to the following Rent and Expences.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
To ſix Servants Wages, (*viz.*) two Holders, two Drivers, a Watchman, and Herd, commonly called Port Servants, or Servants without Doors, at 9 *l.* each a Year, one with another.	54	0	0
To cutting fifty Acres of Fallow after back-ſtirring, to keep the Land dry for Seed ſowing, and cutting of it again after Seeding to carry off the Water at 10 *d.* *per* Acre.	2	1	8
To fifty Barrels of Seed-Wheat to put in Ground, allowing a Barrel an Acre as uſual, at fifteen Shillings a Barrel.	37	10	0
To Iron, and Smiths Work.	10	0	0
To Weeding the ſaid fifty Acres at one Shilling and ſix pence an Acre.	3	15	0
To Reaping, Binding and Stacking the Produce of the ſaid fifty Acres in the Field, at four Shillings an Acre.	10	0	0
	117	6	8

To

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
Carried forward,	117	6	8
To carrying the ſame home and Dreſſing in the Haggard.	1	10	0
To Thraſhing the Produce of the ſaid fifty Acres, being ſix Barrels an Acre Market Corn, together with twenty Barrels of ſmall or dirty Corn, the whole amounting to three Hundred and Twenty Barrels, at eight Pence *per* Barrel.	10	13	4
To Winnowing the ſaid 320 Barrels, at one Penny a Barrel.	1	6	8
To Toll of the three Hundred Barrels that are ſent to Market being three Barrels and three Buſhels valued at fifteen Shillings a Barrel.	2	16	3
To Cuſtom of the ſaid three Hundred Barrels, at one Farthing a Barrel.	0	6	3
	133	19	2

To

	l.	s.	d.
Carried forward.	133	19	2
To Tyth of the said fifty Acres, at five Shillings *per* Acre.	12	10	0

SPRING-CORN.

To one Hundred Barrels of Seed-Oats to put in Ground at five Shillings a Barrel, giving the common Allowance of two Barrels an Acre.	25	0	0
To cutting of fifty Acres of Land after sowing the said Oats to carry off the Water, at four Pence an Acre.		16	8
To Weeding the said fifty Acres, at four Pence an Acre.		16	8
To Reaping, Binding, and Stacking the Produce of the said fifty Acres in the Field, at three Shillings and six Pence an Acre.	8	15	0
To carrying home the same, Reeking and Dressing in the Haggard.	1	10	0
	183	7	6

To

	l.	s.	d.
Carried forward.	183	7	6
To Thraſhing the Produce of the ſaid fifty Acres, amounting to three Hundred Barrels, at four Pence *per* Barrel.	5	0	0
To Winnowing the ſaid three Hundred Barrels, at a Half-penny a Barrel.		12	6
To Toll of the ſaid Number of Barrels, being three Barrels and three Buſhels, at five Shillings *per* Barrel.		18	9
To Cuſtom of the ſaid three Hundred Barrels, at one Farthing a Barrel.		6	3
To the *Farmer*'s Market Expences.	1	10	0
To Tyth of the ſaid fifty Acres, at two Shillings and ſix pence *per* Acre.	6	5	0
To one Year's Rent of the ſaid two Hundred Acres, at ten Shillings *per* Acre.	100	0	0
	298	0	0

Per

Per Contra. Credr.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
By Sale of three Hundred Barrels of Wheat, at fifteen Shillings a Barrel.	225	0	0
By Sale of three Hundred Barrels of Oats, at five Shillings a Barrel.	75	0	0
By Grazing Tenant's Cows, allowing Eight in Number, at one Pound ten Shillings *per* Cow.	12	0	0
By six Houses, and Gardens for the Tenants.	6	0	0
By Grazing six Cows for the *Farmer*'s own use.	9	0	0
By twenty Barrels of small Corn, not fit for Market, but may serve the *Farmer*'s Family, at twelve Shillings *per* Barrel.	12	0	0
Total Produce	339	0	0
Total Charge	298	0	5
Profit Ballance	40	19	7

I TAKE

I TAKE no Notice of the Expence of Hay-making, Wages to Servant Maids, Plow-Timber, Carpenter's Work, Building or Repair of Houſes, Loſs of Cattle, Seſſes, and County Charges: Nor do I take Notice of the *Farmer*'s Straw, becauſe if he ſells it, he can have no Dung to Manure his Ground with, neither will he have the Produce here allowed him, if he doth not Manure.

THIS *Ballance* of Forty Pounds nineteen Shillings and ſeven Pence, is all that ſo conſiderable a *Farmer*, as a Man who undertakes to pay one Hundred Pounds a Year Rent, hath to ſupport and provide for himſelf and his Family, and anſwer all other incident Expences.

I NOW proceed to ſhew my Manner of *Farming*, and ſhall ſtate the Expence and Profits thereon: But muſt obſerve, that inſtead of fifty Acres a Seaſon by the old Method, and tilled with twenty Horſes; I Plow ſixty Acres a Seaſon, with ſixteen Horſes only; and have always found my Land in my Manner tilled, to produce more than ſix Barrels an Acre, altho' I take Credit but for ſix.

IN the Beginning of *Auguſt*, I Plow my Land in Setts, or broad Ridges of ten

Foot wide or thereabouts, with the common *Iriſh* Plow, gathering them high, and round in the middle to throw off the Rain, and continue Plowing untill the firſt of *September*. My reaſon for beginning ſo early, beſides the Advantage of the long Days, is in order to have a Quantity Plowed before I begin to Sow. Then I begin to ſow my *Wheat*, and cover it with a big *Harrow*, in the ſame manner that *Oats* are generally covered, taking care to have the *Harrow* well furniſhed with long Iron Pins, of nine Inches under the Timber, by which the Land is made looſe and fine, the better to receive and cover the Seed; then I run the *Plow* twice through every *Furrow*, to let off the Water, and I commonly have done my *Wheat Sowing* in this Manner, about the middle of *October*. In the Beginning of *April* following, I ſow my *Clover* amongſt my *Wheat* in the ſaid ſixty Acres, and allow a greater Quantity of *Clover* Seed than uſual, *viz.* Twenty eight Pound Weight to every Acre, in order to have my Ground kept clean and mellow, and a cloſer Feeding for a Stock of Sheep. As I ſow the *Clover* Seed, I roll it over with *Rollers*, which at the Diſtance

ſtance of about ten Feet one from the other, go in the *Furrows* on each ſide of the *Sett*, without damage to the *Corn*. By theſe *Rollers* my *Clover* Seed is moſtly covered, and all the Lumps of Earth, that were left by the *Harrows* at Seed-ſowing and meliorated by the Winter Seaſon, are broke and diſperſed over the Corn Plants, and thereby greatly manured. After this rolling, I drive my Sheep over the *Corn*, keeping them as cloſe herded as poſſible, that the *Clover* Seed which was miſſed by the *Rollers* may be trod into the Earth, ſuch as lay in Hollows. In *Auguſt* following I proceed to Plow, as I have already mentioned, for my ſecond Seaſon, and purſue the ſame Method with my former; that is, Plowing in *Auguſt*, ſowing *Wheat* in *September*, and *Clover* in *April*. As to the third Seaſon, I begin to Plow, and Sow my Land as aforeſaid; at which Time my ſecond Seaſon is fit for Reaping; and when reaped, I then have one Hundred and wenty Acres under *Clover*, beſides the ixty Acres preparing for the third Sea-on. The fourth Year I return on my irſt Seaſon and go round alternately on ny other Seaſons, Plowing and Sowing,

as

as I have already mentioned. By this Method, my Land is conſtantly enriched with my ſtock of Sheep. It muſt be obſerved, that I do not take in my full Complement of Sheep, (which is four Hundred for a Farm of this Quantity) untill I reap my ſecond Seaſon of *Wheat*. At the Time I cut my *Corn*, my *Clover* is ſo long, that generally three or four Inches of it, is cut with the Straw at Reaping. With this *Clover*, thus mixt with Straw, my Cattle are fed all the Winter, which proves with the *Chaff* of the *Corn* to be very good Feeding; having not much to do with them from the Time I ſow my *Wheat*, until I ſow my *Clover*, or from thence until *Auguſt*, but to turn out my Manure. As for my *Clover* Sowing, it requires ſo little Time and Trouble, that two Horſes will roll eight Acres a Day.

When I firſt began with this Method, I apprehended the Land would turn to Scutch-Graſs and other Weeds, for want of Summer Plowings: To prevent which, I have made a *Rake* that runs on two *Rollers*, and drawn by two Horſes, with a Cart fixt at the end of it; in this *Rake* are Iron Pins ſo placed, that no Scutch Graſs,

Graſs or other Weeds that are brought over Ground by the *Harrow* at Seed-ſowing, or lie within an Inch or two of the Surface, but what it gathers. Such Graſs or Weeds ſo gathered, fall back of themſelves into this Cart. But by Experience I find no Occaſion for this *Machine*; the Scutch-Graſs and other Weeds being ſuppreſſed by the *Clover*, and by the Land for a Time lying waſte, that it not only deſtroys them, but alſo keeps the Land looſe and mellow, that when it is Plowed and Harrowed, it is as fine, as *Fallow* is commonly after four Plowings.

I HAVE obſerved, that by Summer Plowings in the old Method, if it be a dropping Seaſon, the Scutch Graſs encreaſeth; becauſe when it is cut by the Plow, every Joint of it thus cut, produceth a new Plant.

THIS Account of my Manner of *Farming* I firſt thought proper to give; but will now proceed to ſtate the Expence and Profit thereon; as I have done on the old Method of *Tillage*.

FARM

FARM, *Debr.*

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
To Forty five Barrels of Seed-Wheat, allowing three Bushels an Acre, which by my Method is sufficient, at fifteen Shillings *per* Barrel.	33	10	0
To 400 *Ewes* bought in at four Shilling per *Ewe.*	80	0	0
To a *Herd* to take care of the said Sheep, and the rest of the Cattle.	11	0	0
To five Labourers employ'd, that is, two Holders, two Drivers, and one Driver for the Harrow, at eight Pence a Day, each for sixty five Days, in which Time the said sixty Acres will be Plowed and Sowed, each Plow, plowing about half an Acre a Day.	10	16	8
To Iron and Smiths Work.	2	0	0
To cutting sixty Acres of Land after Sowing, to carry off the Water, at six Pence an Acre.	1	10	0
	138	16	8

To

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
Carried forward.	138	16	8
To Clover Seed, allowing 28 Pound Weight, at one Pound fifteen Shillings a Hundred, amounting to fifteen Hundred Weight.	26	5	0
To weeding the ſaid ſixty Acres, at nine Pence an Acre.	2	5	0
To Reaping, Binding, and Stacking the Produce of the ſaid ſixty Acres, at four Shillings an Acre.	12	0	0
To carrying home the ſame and Dreſſing it in the Haggard.	3	0	0
To Thraſhing the Produce of the ſaid ſixty Acres, being three Hundred and eighty Barrels, including twenty Barrels of ſmall or dirty Corn not fit for Market, at eight Pence *per* Barrel.	12	13	4
To Winnowing the ſame at one Penny *per* Barrel.	1	11	8
	196	11	8

To

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
Expences carried forward.	196	11	8
To Toll of three Hundred and ſixty Barrels, being four Barrels and one Buſhel, at fifteen Shillings *per* Barrel.	3	7	6
To Cuſtom thereof, at one Farthing *per* Barrel.	0	7	4
To Tyth of the ſaid ſixty Acres, at five Shillings *per* Acre.	15	0	0
To Tyth of Lamb and Wool,	8	0	0
To Servants to carry the Corn to Market, and to ſow the Clover-Seed.	2	0	0
To Rent of the ſaid two Hundred Acres, at ten Shillings *per* Acre.	100	0	0
To Market Expences.	1	10	0
	326	16	6

Per

Per Contra, Credr.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
By Sale of three Hundred and ſixty Barrels of Market-Wheat, at fifteen Shillings a Barrel.	226	12	6
By twenty Barrels of ſmall or dirty Corn, for the Uſe of the Farmer's Family, at twelve Shillings *per* Barrel.	12	0	0
By the Profit of four Hundred *Ewes*, at 5 Shillings each, including Lambs and Wool.	125	0	0
By my Stock of *Ewes*, to be ſold out at the Price bought in.	80	0	0
By Profit of ſixteen Cows, at one Pound ten Shillings each.	24	0	0
By ſix Tenants Houſes and Gardens.	6	0	0
By Sale of fifty Load of Hay, at Four Punds a Score.	10	0	0
	483	12	6

Per Contra. Credr.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
Carried forward.	483	12	6
By Sale of fifty Load of Hay at four Pounds a Score.	10	0	0
Total Produce	473	12	6
Total Expence	326	16	6
Profit Ballance	166	16	0
Profit on the old Method	40	19	7
Difference in my Favour	125	16	5

THIS greater Profit in my Manner of *Farming* (I hope) ſince no material Objection can ariſe, will induce People to follow it. Some Encouragement being immediately requiſite, to recover, or encreaſe our Tillage; my Method at this Time, I humbly apprehend to be the moſt apparent. It is certain the many Schemes for improving Tillage in this Kingdom, have hitherto proved ſo unſucceſsful, that ſome *Farmers*, perhaps will be unwilling to go into any other Method, than what was practiſed by their Fore-

Forefathers. Others imagine their Poverty will make it impracticable for them, to purſue any Method but the old, let a new one be attended with ever ſo many Advantages. But to reconcile all Parties to ſee their own Intereſt, and to reclaim them from their former unprofitable Method of Tillage: Let them take the following Directions, and they will ſoon fall into my Method, and that with a ſmall Fund. The great Objection is, that poor *Farmers* have not Money to buy Stock, as required by my Manner. This is anſwered, by ſhewing that the Seed of *Spring-Corn* may be ſold, which otherwiſe would be ſowed in Ground, and this added to what will be ſaved in Labourers, Servants Wages, leſs Conſumption of Hay and Oats, Sale of ſurplus Horſes, and ſeveral other Expences, will in two Years buy a ſufficient Quantity of *Clover*, and Stock of Sheep for their Farms, which Stock is to be taken in by degrees, as their Clover encreaſes; the Clover is to be ſown amongſt the Wheat in the ſmall Ridge for the two firſt Seaſons, then turning two of theſe ſmall Ridges into one, makes the broad Sett of ten Feet wide beforementioned. The

Stubble

Stubble of *Winter-Corn* muſt lye for two Seaſons without Plowing.

It is no Objection to ſay, that Oats and Peaſe by my Method, will become ſcarce, becauſe there are but few Farms that have not more or leſs Land, fit for no other Grain but Oats: Beſides there are ſeveral large Tracts of Ground in the Kingdom, that will not give Wheat, but will give Oats or Rye. Peaſe is moſtly uſed to mix with Wheat, when Bread Corn is dear; that will be remedied, by our having a plentiful Market of Wheat, which may be hoped for in my Method; as the Expence of Plowing and Manuring is leſs than hitherto practiſed, whereby Tillage will conſiderably be more encreaſed, and extended throughout the Kingdom. Dairy People after the firſt Year, may keep the ſame Number of Cows, and Plow one Fourth of their Land for *Winter-Corn*, by leſſening their Stock one Third the firſt Year, untill the Clover (which they are to ſow in their Wheat) comes into Profit. *Farmers* may likewiſe fall into breeding the Troop and Draft Horſe, the Labour of the Cattle being ſo moderate throughout the whole Year. It muſt be

further

further obſerved, that ſowing Wheat in ſtrong Lay Ground will not anſwer, without giving it two Plowings, one croſs the other: Becauſe by one Plowing the Sod will not be ſufficiently broke, ſo as to cover the Seed, and in other Places it would be too much covered by the Sods falling flat on it, which would ſmother and ſuppreſs it. Sowing *Wheat* in the Stubble of *Winter Corn* (called by ſome *Pill-Fallow*) is of as ill Conſequence, the Earth in that Caſe, being too fine will be waſhed off from the Seed by the Winter's Rain; for want of which Earth, the *Corn* when in Ear, will be ſubject to knee and fall down, together with the Lands being impoveriſhed by the immediate Crop before. *Peaſe* Stubble is as bad as either, being commonly too ſtiff and poor.

ENRICHING of Ground by Manure, is juſtly thought to be ſo neceſſary by all Perſons, that without further Conſideration, Heaps of Manure are commonly laid out on Land, tho' perhaps in no Sort prepared to receive it. For, if Ground is infected with under or over Water, Manuring ſuch Ground will not much avail, unleſs it be firſt drained by either an open

Drain,

Drain, or (what is called) a *French* Drain; as to the open Drain, it is eaſily underſtood how, and where to make it; but as to the *French* Drain, I am afraid it hath been too often miſtaken; altho' the greateſt Improvement to *Springy* Ground when properly placed.

Springs very often appear upon the ſide of riſing Grounds, and ſpread over the Land below them, to the great Deſtruction of the Corn and Graſs on ſuch Land; this hath made ſeveral cut their Drains, through the lower Part of this wet Ground, believing it to be all a Spring, and thinking thereby to carry off the Water, but without ſucceſs; becauſe if there be no Communication between the Spring and the Drain, by a Gravel, the Water will not be carried off, ſo as to be of any Advantage to the Land.

There may be ſeveral Springs in one Field, by reaſon of a Kind of yellow Clay, or Ciſtern Earth between them, which obſtructs their Communication, tho' perhaps very near one to the other. Theſe Springs are diſcoverable by ſeveral Obſervations. Firſt, in Winter, when they are ſtrongeſt, and appear over Ground. Secondly; in Plowing for Winter

ter and Spring Corn, when the Earth turns up ſtiff and cold. Thirdly; when under green Corn, the Corn will appear withered, and of a yellow Colour.

To prevent further Miſtakes as to *French* Drains, the beſt way (in my Opinion) is to cut the Drain at the Head of the Spring, or where the Water firſt appears; and conducting it ſo, as it may be properly carried off into ſome Ditch. This Drain is to be made two Foot wide in the Top, and one in the Bottom, ſinking it above four Foot deep; then filling it two Foot deep with Stones, which is to be covered with Straw, filling the Remainder with Earth; no Plow, or any Thing elſe can offend it, provided the Ditches where it is to fall into, be kept ſcoured. Overflowing of Meadow Ground with Land Flood, adds a great Manure to the Soil, and is what I have experienced, and do practice; but care is to be taken that the Water is not to lye longer on the Ground than the Sediment falls.

I HAVE no great Skill in Planting of Trees, altho' it is what I am fond of: However, I have made an Experiment of Planting in a ſalt Marſh, which I re-

claim'd from the Sea, with a ſmall Expence of Banking, and it proves the moſt profitable and beautiful Part of my Land. And as I believe ſeveral Gentlemen in the Kingdom, are in the ſame Circumſtance that I was in, as to my ſalt Marſh, it may not be improper to give the following Account of the Method I have taken, and the Nature of the Marſh, which afforded me but little Profit for want of Shelter, and by its being too frequently overflown by the Spring Tides. On the Surface of this ſalt Marſh was about half a Foot of good Earth, under which were two Foot of Brick Clay, and under that Sand. This Brick Clay when put into a Ditch, retained for a long Time, the Form it was thrown up in, without joining together: And the Sod being ſo full of Ruſhes there was no looſe Earth to cover the Roots of Trees or Quicks, for want of which the Roots of both would ſoon periſh. To remedy this; my Marſh being Banked and ſecured from the Sea, I then divide it into Parks, taking care to have a Quantity of looſe Mold which I got by Plowing up the Sod, where I run my Ditches. This Sod I let lye for a Winter's Seaſon, giving

ing it two or three Plowings, by which it became mellow and fine. Then I threw it up on the Quick ſide, where I alſo planted *Elms* upwards of twenty Foot high, and both Trees and Quicks, grow very well. Great Care muſt be taken to give a good Slope to the Foundation of the Ditch, if there ſhould prove a ſandy Bottom as in mine.

THE Method of Banking, which I obſerved was firſt to ſlope off the Edges of the Marſh ſo gradually, that the Water ſhould not meet with any immediate or ſenſible Oppoſition, which if not ſo done, they being naturally perpendicular, would give ſo direct a Repulſe to the Water, the Ground would ſoon be undermined and wore away, and conſequently the Banks tumbled down: After I have by this Method, prevented the Seas encroaching on my Marſh, I make my Banks as directed by the learned *Dublin Society*, ſo near to the Water, as that the lower Edge of the Bank, comes within three Foot of the Marſh I firſt ſloped.

WILLIAM PLUNKETT.

Portmarnock near *Howth*,
in the County of *Dublin*.

ERRATA.

Page 12. Laſt Line, read roll it over with Rollers drawn by two Horſes, which go in the Furrows, without Damage to the Corn.